

# Light

**...on a new world**



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a quarterly magazine focusing on the Bible  
and its message for today

**The Genesis Flood** ●

**Paul at Athens** ●

**Who invented the gearwheel?** ●

VOLUME 24.4

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## Light on a new world

### Volume 24.4

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#### Note:

All Bible quotations are taken from the New  
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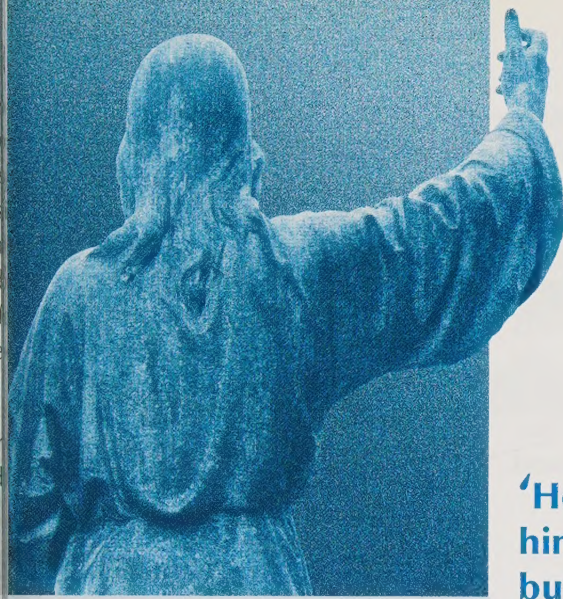
#### Cover picture:

*The Horsehead Nebula in the  
constellation Orion. Infrared photograph  
by the high resolution Wide Field  
Camera 3 of the Hubble Telescope –  
see page 7*

*INSET: The Parthenon, Athens –  
see page 20*

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## WHAT DID JESUS MEAN?

**'He who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one'**

Maybe you don't know this verse (Luke 22.36).

Does it come as a surprise to you? Perhaps you think of Jesus in the hymn by Charles Wesley which starts with the words 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild'.

Or perhaps you thought that his message was all about peace and love. How does this equate with Jesus telling his followers to buy weapons?

You might think this is a fairly minor issue but a brief look at the internet will find you plenty of (mainly American) websites which use this Scripture to justify the bearing of

arms. Therefore, it is really important to understand exactly what Jesus meant by these words.

### The Prince of Peace

Are we right to think of Jesus only in terms of peace? We may know some Bible verses that support this:

'But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also' (Matthew 5.39).

'But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you' (Matthew 5.44 – see also Luke 6.27,28).

So here we have clear evidence that Jesus preached peace and indeed practised peace. When the swords

were actually used at the time of his arrest in Gethsemane, Jesus rebuked his followers and said to Peter: *'Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which my Father has given me?'* (John 18.11). Matthew's account adds the words *'for all who take the sword will perish by the sword'* (Matthew 26.52). It is clear from these passages that Jesus was not advocating armed resistance at the time of his arrest.

## A mystery

So this leaves us with a real puzzle. First Jesus teaches his followers non-resistance to evil and then he tells them to buy swords. Lastly, he rebukes Peter for using the sword he told him to get. In fact, the disciples already had the swords and that raises more questions.

What options does this give us?

1. The disciples should own a sword but not use it.
2. Jesus did not mean his words to be taken literally.

## Types of sword

In the Gospel accounts of Matthew and John, the Greek word for sword is *'machaira'*, which a Bible dictionary describes as *'a large knife, used for killing animals and cutting up flesh'*. It was a small single bladed sword, as distinguished from a large sword. There is another Greek word

for sword – *'rhomphaia'*, which is defined as *'a large sword, worn on the shoulder'* and was used in battle as a thrusting or slashing weapon.

It would be convenient to draw a clear distinction between a large knife the disciples used to protect themselves from wild animals and the large military sword, used in battle. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The sword carried by the Philippian jailer in Acts 16.27 was also a *'machaira'*.

Both words are used in a figurative as well as a literal sense. The *'machaira'* is used to describe the power of God's Word as *'sharper than any two-edged sword (machaira), piercing even to the division of soul and spirit...a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart'* (Hebrews 4.12) The *'rhomphaia'* is used figuratively in the Book of Revelation to describe Jesus:

*'...out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword...'* (Revelation 1.16). We will come back to this figurative use of the sword.

Why did the disciples have swords?

Peter was the disciple who used the sword, so we can assume one of them belonged to him. As a fisherman, Peter would have needed a knife to splice nets and ropes and also perhaps to prepare the fish.





*Reproductions of three swords now in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens. The bottom one is an example of the 'machaira'*

One of the apostles, Simon the Zealot, had been associated with a movement working to drive the Romans out of Judea (Luke 6.15). Is it possible that he still had a weapon from his resistance-fighting days?

We have ample evidence in Scripture that the disciples did not fully understand Jesus' mission and expected him to establish the Kingdom of God there and then (see Luke 19.11 and Acts 1.6).

## **No need for weapons**

If the mission of Jesus had been to drive out the Romans and establish the Kingdom of God, he would not have relied on human might and weapons of war. In rebuking Peter for using a sword, Matthew tells us that Jesus added these words:

"...do you think that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he will provide me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook him and fled' (Matthew 26.53-56).

## **A simple explanation**

Jesus said that the events in the Garden of Gethsemane must happen in order that Scripture might be fulfilled and we can find the words he quoted in the prophecy of Isaiah:

'Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he

poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors' (Isaiah 53.12).

Is this perhaps one reason why Jesus suggested that the disciples needed to arm themselves with a sword? In Roman occupied Palestine, any civilian carrying a sword would be seen as a threat, possibly part of a resistance movement or insurrection – in other words, a transgressor and liable to be arrested. The disciples fled when the time came and only Jesus was arrested as a 'transgressor'. The prophetic words of Isaiah were again fulfilled afterwards when Jesus was crucified with a thief on either side of him.

## The sword as a symbol

It has been suggested that Jesus was speaking figuratively when he asked those disciples who didn't have a sword to buy one. When the disciples responded by saying 'Lord, look, here are two swords', his reply 'it is enough' was perhaps an expression of exasperation that the disciples had taken his words literally (Luke 22.38).

As we have already noted, sometimes the sword is used in a symbolic sense, so rather than talking about a real sword, it is being used as a symbol for something else.

*Reconstruction of Macedonian troops, all wielding 'machaira'-type swords with curved blades. Note the shield, breastplate etc referred to by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians*





On another occasion Jesus said to the disciples: *'Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword'* (Matthew 10.34). These words may just give us a clue to the meaning of this puzzle.

Is Jesus speaking figuratively in this verse? The context supplies the answer, for the chapter contains a warning about the persecutions the disciples would suffer for their faith. The passage continues *'a man's foes will be those of his own household'* (Matthew 10.36). Jesus is in effect saying that following Christ and preaching the Gospel message would bring much opposition, even to the extent of separating families. The *'sword'* is used here by Jesus in a figurative sense to describe the effect of his teaching on those who refused to accept it.

Where else can we find swords used symbolically? The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians about the Christian warfare in these words:

**'Therefore, take up the full armour of God, that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to**

**all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God'.** (Ephesians 6.13-17 NASB)

In this passage the sword is used by the Apostle Paul to represent the Word of God. So what did Jesus mean when he said *'he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one'*? (Luke 22.36). Jesus is in effect saying 'If you do not have the Word of God, give up everything to obtain it'. This harmonizes with Jesus' other teaching about the kingdom of God:

*'...the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field'* (Matthew 13.44).

*'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it'* (Matthew 13.45, 46).

In the trials and uncertainties that the followers of Jesus would face after his death, they would need a strong faith and would need to be prepared to give up everything, in order to keep a firm hold upon their hope in the coming Kingdom of God.

## Conclusion

So this is an intriguing verse and there is a simple explanation as well as a deeper one, but we find no suggestion that Jesus was going against all his other teachings and advocating violence – even in self-defence. The follower of Jesus must refrain from all forms of violence and be prepared to suffer for the sake of Christ (see teaching in the Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5.43-48). When Jesus stood before the Roman governor Pilate on trial for his life, he underlined the importance of non-resistance to evil. He said to Pilate: *'If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews...'* (John 18.36).

His two-fold objective was firstly to fulfil all that was written in the Old Testament Scriptures concerning him and secondly to tell his followers to prioritise on what is truly important – seeking God and His kingdom. This would not be an easy course and, like Jesus, his servants would suffer for their faith. The Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to *'endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ'* (2 Timothy 2.3). This Christian warfare does not rely on the use of a sword but remaining true to the faith. Paul was able to sum up his life *'as a good soldier of Jesus Christ'* in these words to Timothy:

*'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing'*

(2 Timothy 4.7,8).

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# Who is God

## and what does He want from us?

The universe is large; that has always been appreciated. However, with the advancement of technology, its sheer scale continues to be a source of amazement. Scientific knowledge has increased tremendously. More and more sophisticated telescopes, some operating from space, mean even more discoveries deeper into space (see cover).

The size of the universe is a great unknown and the subject of debate. Even our own galaxy, the Milky Way of which our planet is an insignificant part, is bewildering in size. It is reckoned to contain approximately 200 to 400 billion ( $400 \times 1,000 \times 1,000,000$ ) stars. The fact that this is such a large approximation is notable in itself!

The way astronomers and physicists often speak, and the confidence with which their views are reported, one could easily be led to believe that the secrets of the universe have been unlocked, but this is not so.



**Sun**  $R \approx 0.7$  million km



**Orange Star**  
**Arcturus**  $R \approx 20$  million km



**Orbit of Mars**  
 $R \approx 227$  million km

**Red Giant**  
**Antares**  $R \approx 300$  million km

**Note: R = Radius**

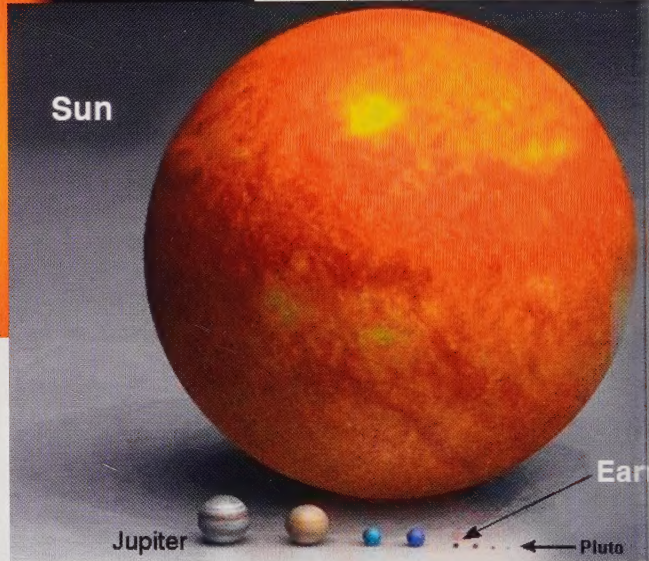
Scientific theories are discussed, particularly in the media, as if they are fact; including the formation of the universe, its age, the origin of energy, matter and even life. So much time and money has been invested in these theories involving so many academic brains, that we could easily conclude that they know what they're talking about. However, it is surprising how little is known about the universe. By their own admission, the majority of the 'known universe' is a complete mystery to scientists.

## Dark matter

The 'known universe' is reckoned to be something in the order of 20 billion to 40 billion light years across. One light year represents the distance light travels in a year which

*LEFT: Our Sun compared in size with the largest known Star, the Red Giant Antares*

*BELOW: Our earth compared in size with the Sun*

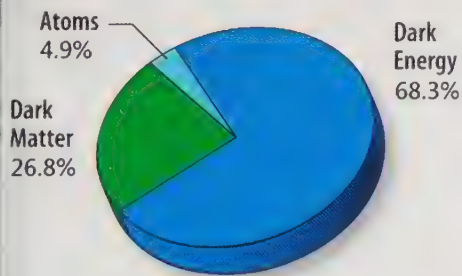


is nearly 6 trillion ( $6 \times 1,000,000 \times 1,000,000$ ) miles. Yet science cannot explain how the fabric of the universe is held together. For it to be so, and on the basis of known physical laws, it requires significantly more mass in the universe than can be detected. The matter that should be there, and therefore by inference is assumed to be there (but is currently undetectable by direct means), is called 'dark matter'. It is estimated that dark matter constitutes 84.5% of the total matter in the universe and 26.8% of the total content (matter and energy) of the universe (Wikipedia online encyclopaedia).



In astronomy and cosmology dark matter is inferred to exist from gravitational effects on visible matter and background radiation, but cannot be seen through a telescope and is undetectable by emitted or scattered electromagnetic radiation. Its existence was hypothesized to account for discrepancies between measurements of the mass of galaxies, clusters of galaxies and the entire universe.

It is remarkable that more than 80% of the fabric of the known universe is a mystery. That percentage gets bigger when you add 'dark energy' into the equation – dark energy being another component of the universe which is not directly observable but assumed to be there by implication.



As illustrated by the chart, only 5% of the matter and energy in the 'known universe' can be directly detected and studied whereas 95% is undetectable except by inference. That being the case, why is the scientific community so confident in its theories and conclusions?

This is how the situation was reported, rather euphemistically, in the conclusions of a scientific conference held in Madrid in 2006:

*'Up to now science has failed to identify what makes up to 95% of the energy of the Universe. Elucidating the nature of dark matter and dark energy constitutes a key challenge in modern physics'* (Workshop on Dark Matter – Madrid conference 2006).

What other challenge can there be but to locate and/or identify the missing 95% of the known universe?

In view of this rather absurd situation, why are the theories of the scientific community often regarded as fact and why is the possibility of a God, the Creator of the universe, dismissed out of hand? As a practical example, think of it in terms of a satellite navigation aid (SatNav) which has a memory chip in it containing only 5% of the available roads and cities. Would you rely on it to take you to a destination?

## The unknown God

If you feel this article has so far tended to focus on the negative, let's turn to the positive side of the argument. In the first century AD, the Apostle Paul was trying to persuade people of the existence of the God of the Bible. He made a speech to the philosophers of his day in Athens, after seeing a shrine dedicated to 'the unknown God'.

## TO THE UNKNOWN GOD

The thrust of Paul's argument was that the one they worshipped in ignorance, he was declaring to them. They believed in something, but weren't sure what and Paul engaged them on the basis that he was filling the void:

'...for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD**. Therefore, the one whom you worship without knowing, him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands' (Acts 17.23, 24).

Although Paul's words were spoken 2,000 years ago, parallels can be drawn with our times. Scientists theorise that there is more to the 'known' universe – in fact 95% more to it!. They prefer, however, to insist it is unknown, yet at the same time refute the possibility that the universe could have been created and is sustained by God as the Bible claims.

To suggest that mainstream scientific theory is, in effect, no different from the 'superstitious' views of Paul's day would be utterly rejected by the

scientific community. There is unquestionably matter and/or energy in the universe which is known to be there but cannot be seen. However, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the original source of this power or energy is the God of the Bible and that it did not occur by chance. This is what the Bible tells us about the origin of the universe:

'By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth' (Psalm 33.6).

'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament (sky) shows his handiwork' (Psalm 19.1).

If the universe is the product of God's creation, then it follows that He is not bound by the laws of the universe, and that is certainly the picture which emerges throughout the Bible. Yet, God exists in the universe and as Paul told the Athenians: '*...in him we live and move and have our being*' (Acts 17.28). With that knowledge comes responsibility as Paul wrote to the early Christians in Rome:

'...since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since



the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools' (Romans 1.20-22 NIV).

## **Paul's message to the Athenians**

In his speech to the Athenians, Paul went on to declare that, not only was God the Creator of the universe and all life, but that the time had come to respond to this situation. He said:

'In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead' (Acts 17.30,31 NIV).

Although God had tolerated people's ignorance in the past, He now required everyone to take notice because:

- ❖ He had set a day when He will bring the world to judgment
- ❖ He has given confirmation of that by raising His Son from the dead.

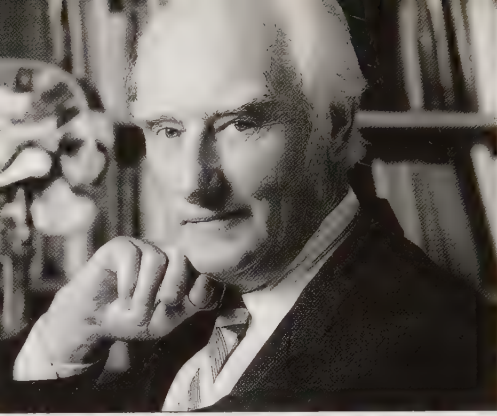
It's not the purpose of this article to point to the evidence that Jesus was raised from the dead. Suffice it to say that many have tried to disprove it, not least the Jewish leaders of his day who had him crucified. But they were unable to do so, because of the irrefutable evidence from those who were witnesses.

Commonsense dictates that the universe cannot be here from nothing and by chance. Matter and energy cannot be created from nothing. Many scientists say otherwise, but do you really want to accept their word, when so much is theory based on their knowledge of just 5% of the known universe?

The earth cannot be here by accident. Life on earth cannot be here by accident in all its myriad and complicated forms. Every living thing shows design; and for order and design to (allegedly) appear by chance contradicts the basic laws of physics.

## **Evidence for a Creator**

The famous physicist Albert Einstein was not a religious person. However, he came to the conclusion that there had to be an originator and maker of the universe. He referred to this entity as 'The Old One'. Einstein's work is accepted as valid, and many scientists have to accept there is order and design to be observed but refuse to take this to its logical conclusion – the existence of God.



*Francis Crick, Nobel Prize winner and author of the theory of 'Directed Panspermia'*

DNA stands for deoxyribonucleic acid. It is a highly complex protein which contains the genetic blueprint within every living cell. DNA is responsible for the function of the cell including the cell's reproduction.

**Francis Crick** is notable for being one of the discoverers of DNA and he was awarded the Nobel prize for science in 1962. Not so well known are his views on the origin of DNA. He came to the conclusion that the DNA molecule was so complex that it was not possible for it to have evolved. Faced with this predicament, he came up with a theory that DNA originated elsewhere in the universe (by means unknown) but was brought to earth on a space ship. The theory, although more akin to something from a science fiction novel, is given the respectability of a scientific name – 'Directed Panspermia'.

## Why do people reject a Creator?

For anyone who has made the 'quantum leap' and accepted that God exists (though it really is no leap at all) we must ask – why is the idea of God so universally discounted? Why are people so prejudiced against the idea that there is a God?

Many people today don't want to believe in God. They don't want to be accountable to God. Instead, they prefer the theory of evolution which comes with the illusion of freedom – freedom from responsibility to a Creator.


## What does God say about Himself?

The prophet Isaiah made this declaration about God some 2,700 years ago:

'I am the LORD, and there is no other; there is no God besides me. I will gird you, though you have not known me, that they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I the LORD, do all these things' (Isaiah 45. 5-7).

Since God is infinite, and we are not, it's not surprising that there is a great gulf between His ways and values, and our own. As the prophet reminds us:



The image shows the Butterfly Nebula (NGC 6302) in deep space. It features two large, wing-like structures of glowing gas, primarily in shades of pink, purple, and white, set against a dark background filled with distant stars. The wings are spread out, giving it a butterfly-like appearance. The gas is illuminated by a central source, likely a dying star, which is not directly visible.

*Butterfly Nebula NGC6302.  
A dying star (hidden from  
view) ejects clouds of gas  
heated to 36,000 degrees F.  
It lies in our Milky Way  
Galaxy roughly 3,800 light  
years away.*

*Photographed July 27 2009  
with the Hubble telescope's  
Wide Field Camera*

**'For as the heavens are higher than  
the earth, so are my ways higher  
than your ways, and my thoughts  
than your thoughts'**

**(Isaiah 55.9)**

## What does God want from us?

The answer is - not the things that people tend to value! What people want tends to be material possessions or to just enjoy themselves. Most people spurn God's ways, partly because the things which He values are also very often spurned as well but this is what God tells us He values:

'But on this one will I look: on him who is poor (humble) and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word' (Isaiah 66.2).

'And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him' (Hebrews 11.6 NIV).

Faith is valued by God. Faith gives us an assurance that, although we can't directly see or detect Him, we can see the evidence of His creation and conform to His requirements as set out in the Bible. God doesn't require a blind faith. If we read the Bible diligently and with an open mind, it will authenticate its claim that God is its author and the product of an intelligent and all powerful Creator.

## Conclusion

God is the power and the intellect behind the universe. Even the atheistic scientific community have to accept that there is matter and

energy in the universe that they cannot explain. They don't recognise the concept of faith, yet they believe that scientific exploration will give the answers to the questions that they cannot answer, including the origin of life. Human intellect has no answers to these questions, despite what they would have us believe.

God offers something better; a fundamental change for the world and its inhabitants and the Bible holds the key to participating in that hope for the future:

**'For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD, and there is no other...**

**Look to me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! for I am God, and there is no other' (Isaiah 45. 18,22).**

Simon Boyd  
London, UK

**Editor's note:** For further information send for your free copy of 'Light on Creation' (see back cover).



"MARVELLOUS ARE YOUR WORKS"

# Who invented the gearwheel?

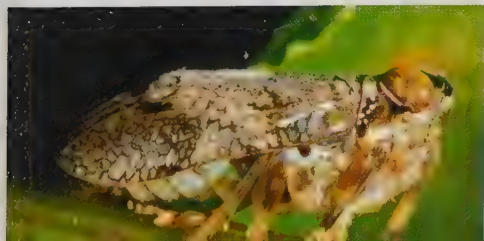
Writing in 1802, an English clergyman called William Paley imagines himself as a traveller crossing a heath. He stumbles across a pocket watch lying amongst the stones at his feet. He realises how different the watch is from the stones – he can tell from the way it is made, its organisation and its obvious purpose that the watch had a designer and maker.

He sees a link between the watch and the natural world and suggests

that many features of nature, particularly of the human body, show similar evidence of a designer. So in his book 'Natural Theology' Paley spells out the classic argument for Design in Nature, an argument that has been hotly debated ever since.

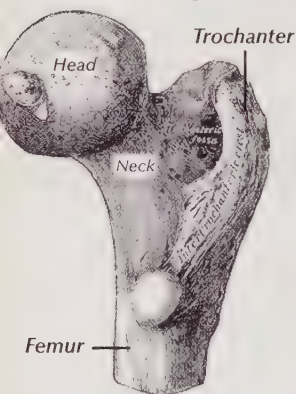
When Paley opened the back of his watch he would have seen a complex arrangement of gearwheels large and small, all working together to turn the hands of the watch at precisely the speed required. Whilst he saw similarities between the watch and complex organs like the eye and the ear, he would surely never have believed that nature might contain its own version of the gearwheel. Yet that is what has very recently been discovered (published in 'Science' magazine September 2013).

This is the animal: '*issus coleoptratus*', a small insect 5-6mm long, common



throughout Europe. It doesn't fly, but it is one of the world's great jumpers, accelerating at nearly 400 g (acceleration due to gravity) as it takes off, propelled by its two strong back legs.

It may be helpful to compare the insect's leg with the more familiar human leg. The human femur has a

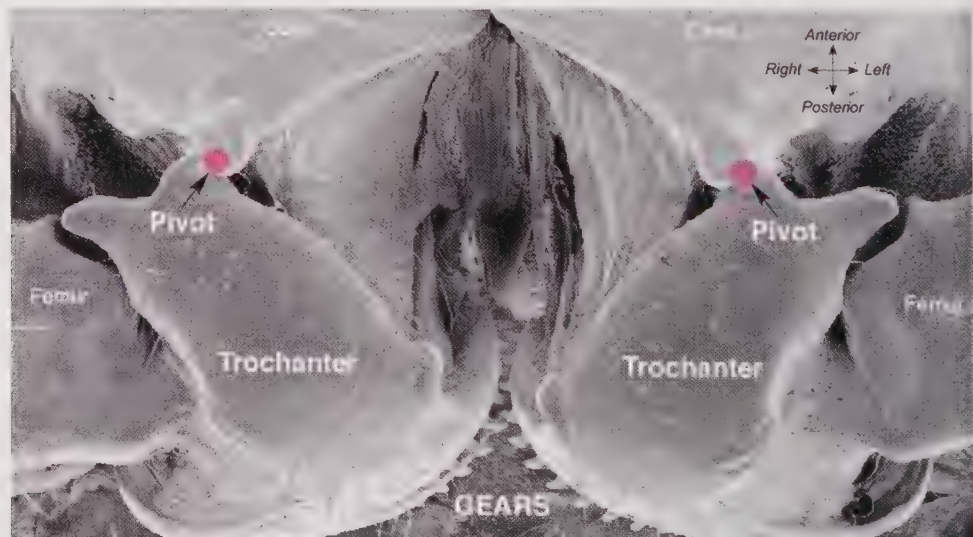


large bony protrusion at the top just below the ball head that fits into the socket of the hip. This protrusion is called the 'trochanter' (in humans there is a 'greater' and a 'lesser' trochanter) and it acts as the main attachment point for muscles.

The insect has a similar arrangement, but at the top of the insect's femur

part of the trochanter widens out into a flat disc. These two discs (one for the right leg and the other for the left) are large enough to touch each other. Where they touch they interlock with a series of small teeth or cogs around the edge of the disc (see scanning electron micrograph below). This means that the two back legs do not always move independently but can be locked together.

The purpose of the arrangement is to make sure that when 'issus' takes a huge leap, both legs 'trigger' at exactly the same time, otherwise the unfortunate bug might spin uncontrollably in the air. Each leg has its own set of muscles, but the electrical signals that trigger the jump are not precise enough to ensure absolutely simultaneous motion at very high speed – hence the 'gearwheels' to synchronise the movement of the two legs.





The cogs or 'teeth' are quite different in shape to the human-engineered version. They have a wave-like or 'shark fin' profile, and are special in two ways:

1. They are very, very small (see the dimension in microns on the right – a micron is 1/1000 mm).
2. They operate at an incredibly high speed – a short burst at almost 50,000 teeth per second.

By any definition this arrangement is a 'machine' – interrelated components working together to achieve a particular objective, synchronous movement. Did this machine have a designer, or did it originate from a process of evolution?

### Can evolution produce machines?

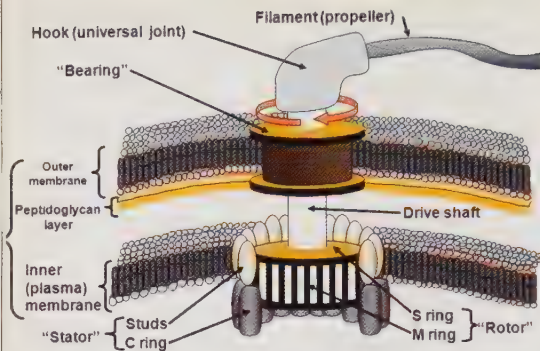
In 1949 J.B.S. Haldane, a famous British evolutionist, claimed that evolution could never produce 'various mechanisms, such as the wheel and the magnet, which would be useless till fairly perfect'. Leaving aside what he meant by 'fairly perfect'(!), presumably he felt on safe ground, as at the time no such machines were known to exist in nature.

As science has probed deeper, the picture has changed. Nature does have machines. The best known example is the motor that drives the flagellum (the whip-like tail/propeller) of a bacteria, a fast spinning rotor that contains all the



finely tuned components that we would expect from an engineer (see next page and also a previous article in this series, 'miniscule motors', Vol. 23 No.3). As for the magnets referred to by Haldane, a number of examples are now known of animals that use magnetic sensors to navigate, including turtles, monarch butterflies and bacteria.

Haldane recognised the enormous problems of explaining how such



*the rotor that drives the bacterial flagellum*

to work well enough to confer some significant advantage on that particular insect, so that it can be perpetuated on the 'survival of the fittest' principle.

precise mechanisms, including a number of separate components all working together, could originate from a chance evolutionary process of trial and error – and in 1949 he knew nothing about the information requirements of such systems.

The subminiature gearwheels in this tiny planthopper illustrate the problems involved. You need two separate components (the trochanter), identical except that one is right-handed and the other left. The shape and strength of the teeth need to be sufficient to transfer the necessary energy but with minimal friction; the two sets of teeth need to be perfectly formed and spaced to mesh together without jamming up; the 'pivot' of each wheel needs to be accurately placed to achieve rotation without eccentricity; and so on.

Can you imagine the problems of constructing such a machine by trial and error, using only the random changes ('mutations') supposedly provided by the evolutionary process, and with no blueprint, no conception of what the actual role of this mechanism is? And each step towards the finished machine needs

These cogwheels have not been carefully machined from inert material like brass or steel or nylon. They are built from living cells, able to grow, repair and rebuild themselves. Every time that 'issus' molts, it sheds and rebuilds this mechanism. How does it know how to do that? Because every cell of its body contains the blueprint in the code of its DNA, and each cell has the tools needed to read and interpret that code and build on its instructions.

Is it rational to believe that all this happened by accident, without plan, without purpose, without intelligence?

**...so who invented the gearwheel?**

Whatever the textbooks may say, it wasn't the ancient Greeks – 'issus' was hopping around long before them.

So was it Darwinian evolution?

Or was it the great Creator, the supreme Intelligence and Designer of all things?

What do you think?

Roy Toms  
Norfolk, UK





# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH

## Part 11 (continued):

### Paul's 2nd missionary journey

We note from the book of Acts that it was generally through contention, persecution and suffering that the gospel message was conveyed from place to place, as Jesus had commanded his followers: '...when they persecute you in this city, flee to another' (Matthew 10.23). In each case we see the hand of God directing that work, so that His Word and the gospel message were preached extensively throughout the Roman world.

#### Paul at Athens

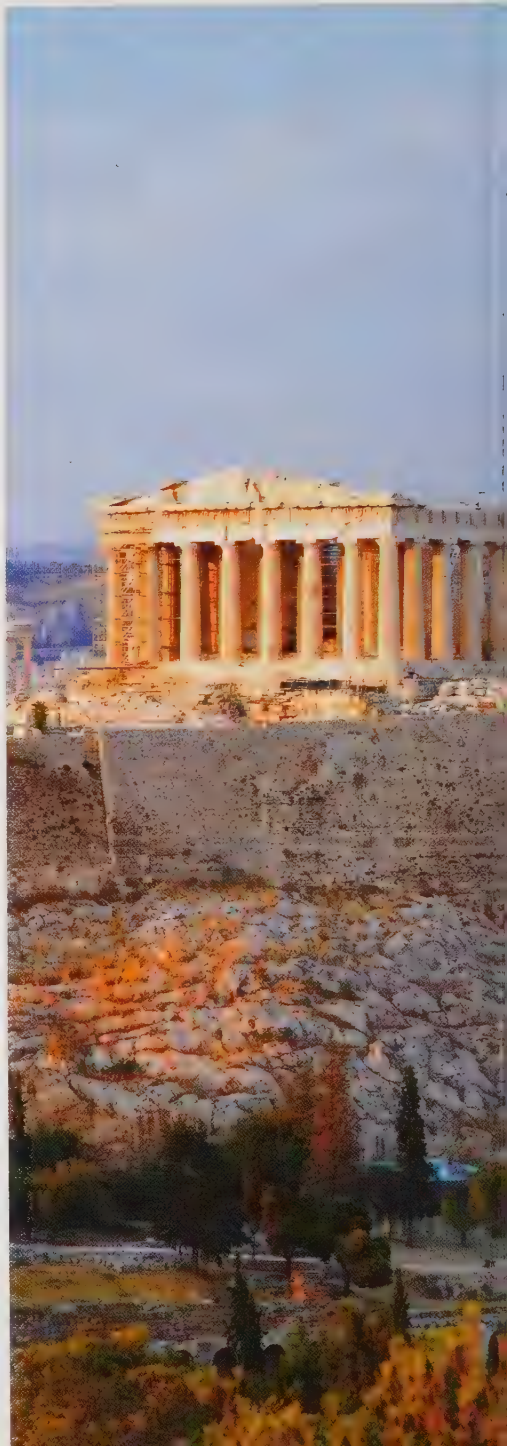
Paul was left alone at Athens, a city noted for its idolatry. This moved him to dispute firstly with the Jews in the synagogue, then with any devout Gentiles and lastly with all those present in the marketplace (Acts 17.16, 17). Athens was a place of learning, the intellectual capital of the ancient world and it was here that Paul came into contention with the leading Greek philosophers. They derided Paul and accused him of preaching a strange God because Paul had preached to them Jesus and his resurrection. So they took Paul and brought him to the Court of Areopagus (the Greek name for Mars Hill), where they judged matters of importance, and asked him to give account of himself and of his teaching (Acts 17.19).

## Paul's preaching on Mars Hill

Mars Hill was close to the Acropolis in Athens, overshadowed by those temples to the pagan gods of Greece and Rome including the Parthenon, the ruins of which are still there today. We can imagine Paul as he addressed these learned men of Athens, surrounded by shrines and images to pagan deities including one with the title '*TO THE UNKNOWN GOD*'. It has been suggested that this remarkable inscription was an attempt to allay their fears that they might in their ignorance incur the wrath of a deity who was not being worshipped.

The God of Israel was unknown to the Athenians and Paul seized on the opportunity to preach this '*unknown God*' to them whilst demonstrating the folly of idolatry. Paul did not reason with them from the Scriptures, because unlike the Jews he had preached to, the Word of God was completely unknown to them. The thrust of his argument was that the '*unknown God*' had revealed himself to all mankind as the Creator of all things, the only real God in contrast to their multitude of pagan deities:

*The Parthenon on the Acropolis, Athens. The building was nearly 500 years old when Paul visited the city. It was a shrine to the goddess Athena, one of the many pagan Gods worshipped by the Greeks.*







*“God, who made the world and everything in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is he worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed anything, since he gives to all life, breath, and all things. And he has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17.24-27).*

Paul also told them that God, having overlooked their ignorance in the

*The Areopagus (Mars Hill) seen from the Acropolis This rocky outcrop was the site of a High Court of Appeal in civil and criminal cases.*

past was now commanding ‘all men everywhere’ to repent (Acts 17.30). The word ‘repent’ is translated from a Greek word which means to change one’s mind or to think differently – and always for the better! God had promised to change things too, to overthrow the kingdoms of men, by sending His Son Jesus back to the earth to judge it in righteousness and God has guaranteed that this would happen by raising Jesus from the dead (Acts 17.31).

Some of his hearers mocked and others said they would listen again some other time. Most of his hearers did not get another opportunity to hear Paul again. They should have taken the opportunity whilst it was there. However, there were some that obeyed the call of the gospel, joined themselves to Paul's company and believed. What is your reaction to Paul's teaching about the one true God and His plan for the world centred in the work of His Son Jesus?

## Paul at Corinth

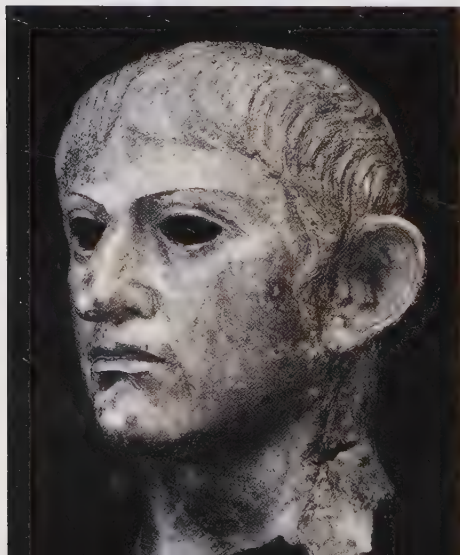
Paul had more work to do, and that work meant him moving on, this time from Athens to Corinth, a cosmopolitan city and a trading centre, which attracted visitors from all over the Roman Empire.

Here he found a Jew named Aquila, who with his wife Priscilla had been

sent into exile from Rome where they had previously lived, as a result of a decree made by the **Emperor Claudius** ordering all Jews to leave Rome (Acts 18.1). Paul stayed and worked with them as he was also a tentmaker by trade. Paul wrote a number of times that he worked for a living, even though continuing to preach. When he later wrote to the Corinthians he reminded them that '*we labour, working with our own hands*' (1 Corinthians 4.12). He continued to support himself and gave this as an example for others to follow.

Again Paul began by preaching to the Jews in the synagogue, showing that the Jews were always to be given the opportunity of hearing the Word of God first, for they were still God's people. He reasoned in the synagogue with them, and both Jews and Gentiles were converted there. Silas and Timothy eventually joined him in Corinth, bringing reports of the young ecclesia in Thessalonica, and this encouraged him to write to them.

Paul's preaching at Corinth was identical to everywhere else – that Jesus was the Christ (the Messiah), the anointed king who would reign on the earth. Again there was opposition and blasphemy from the



*Bronze head of the Emperor Claudius, found in 1907 at Rendham in Suffolk, now in the British Museum*



Jews and again Paul turned to the Gentiles. He moved to the home of Justus, adjacent to the synagogue. The ruler of the synagogue, believed, as did all of his household, and it is recorded that '*many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized*' (Acts 18.8). Notice again the emphasis on belief of the gospel first, followed by baptism.

### **'Do not be afraid'**

At this point in time Paul appeared to become concerned about the possible consequences of the opposition he had faced at Corinth. However, in a vision by night, God told him not to hold his peace but to continue to speak, because God would remain with him and protect him. He was told that God had called many people in Corinth.

When Peter had preached to the centurion Cornelius, he said: '*In*

*truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears him and works righteousness is accepted by him*' (Acts 10.34, 35). This shows us that the calling of God is to people of all nations, all backgrounds and all walks of life.

Paul stayed a year and a half in Corinth, but again his preaching was interrupted by the Jews, who had Paul arrested, accusing him that he was preaching things contrary to the Law of Moses. **Gallio** was the Roman pro-consul of the region at that time

*BELOW: The ruins of the Temple of Appollo at Delphi. In the early 19th century fragments of a letter from the Emperor Claudius were found here, in which Claudius mentions 'L. Junius Gallio, my friend and proconsul'. This confirms the accuracy of Luke's account in Acts and is important in establishing the chronology of Paul's life.*



and he heard the accusation. Very quickly it became apparent to him that it was the Jews, trying to protect their Law and their own position in life, that had made them deliver up Paul, and he dismissed the case against Paul. After this incident Paul stayed for a time in Corinth, but then set sail to return to Antioch from where he had commenced this long missionary journey.

## Conclusion

In this article we have seen how the gospel message was preached widely in the Roman world despite much opposition and persecution. The message spoke about God, as the Creator, the gospel or good news of the coming kingdom of God, the resurrection, the need for repentance and baptism (by full immersion in water) and a new way of life in preparation for the return of Jesus Christ as the future king. Jesus warned his disciples that following him did not make them immune from those who were intent on opposing them and even persecuting them and the same applies today in some parts of the world. This is part of the believer's life and a test of our allegiance to Christ as he said to his immediate followers: *'...you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved'* (Matthew 10.22).

In general, the majority of Jews who were scattered throughout the Roman Empire chose to reject the gospel message and many Gentiles gladly accepted it to begin a new life as Christians. These men and women died in faith and have been *'asleep'* in Christ for nearly 2,000 years. The day will come when their faith will be rewarded and they will be raised from the *'sleep'* of death as Paul encouraged the Thessalonians in his first letter: *'For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him'* (1 Thessalonians 5.9,10).

Our readers are encouraged to follow their example whilst there is time and opportunity to do so and prepare now for the day appointed by God when as Paul told the Athenians, He *'will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained'* (Acts 17.31).

Clive Brooks  
Sussex, UK





*The Bible stands*

# THE TEST OF TIME

## THE GENESIS FLOOD

'Of course it's the Flood'.

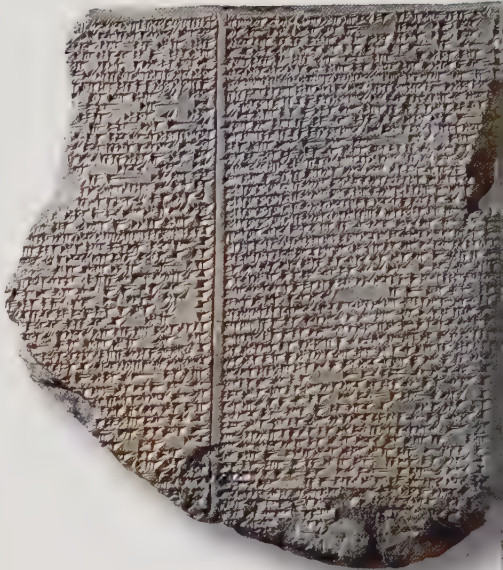
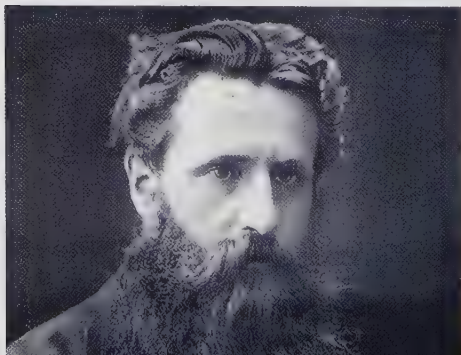
So said the wife of Sir Leonard Woolley when he was excavating a deep pit he had dug at a place called Ur of the Chaldees in Mesopotamia. This was the birthplace of Abraham, one of the most important characters in the Old Testament.

Woolley's diggers had excavated down to a thick band of clay and they were puzzling over its significance. Woolley was carrying out archaeological digs (which he did between 1922 and 1934) for the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania. He discovered the very beginnings of Ur, tracing its occupation through to around 400 BC. The thick band of clay proved indeed to have been laid down in a flood of water, but of much greater significance was that in excavating deeper, beneath the clay, evidence was revealed of an earlier occupation, including shards of pottery from a previous period.

Woolley believed he had found physical evidence of the great flood recorded in Genesis chapters six and seven.

Other accounts of the flood have been discovered in addition to the record in the book of Genesis. In the 1850's Henry Layard dug out of the ruins of Nineveh thousands of fragments of clay tablets which had once formed the Library of Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria. It wasn't until 1872, that George Smith working in the British Museum, made a sensational discovery. He translated the cuneiform script of four broken tablets that had lain untranslated in the museum for 20 years, and buried in the sands of Mesopotamia for thousands of years before that. This discovery was one of the most significant archaeological finds of the 19th Century.

This was an ancient poem that unmistakably bore the same essentials as the Biblical account of Noah and the flood. Here was a Babylonian account of the great



*The Babylonian Gilgamesh 'flood tablet', now in the British Museum*

deluge spoken of in the Bible. Details such as the ship coming to rest on a hilltop, followed by the account of the sending forth of the dove, finding no resting place and returning to the ship were all there. In this account king Gilgamesh meets Utnapishtim (the Babylonian Noah). This 'flood tablet' can now be seen on display in the British Museum and is a Babylonian copy of a much older account, being the 11th part of a 12-book epic.

Such was the popular interest in Smith's findings (even William Gladstone, the British Prime Minister, was present at his first lecture) that he was sent out on an

*George Smith*



expedition for the British Museum sponsored by a national newspaper, and in May 1873 after just 3 days of digging he discovered a much older account called the Atrahasis epic dating from the 16th century BC, 1,000 years older than the Babylonian flood tablet. Assembling the fragments of his find, Smith was able to reveal the story of Atrahasis, who built a boat and loaded onto it his possessions, animals and birds. He was saved, whilst the rest of mankind was destroyed.

Whilst the tablets contain some recognisable strands of original truth concerning creation and the flood account, the details are interwoven with legend not found in the Bible in the Genesis account. However, their discovery is very significant for Bible scholars as evidence pointing to a great original historic event – the flood itself.

Another discovery was made later in 1922 by Herbert Weld Blundell which is on display in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. This is a small clay prism containing lists of names of ancient Sumerian kings that ruled southern Mesopotamia between 3200 BC and 1800 BC. There is reference made to the flood as an historic fact; *'the flood swept over the land'*. Further, the eight kings who are said to have reigned before

the flood had extremely long life spans, and these dramatically shortened after the flood. This matches the pattern recorded in Genesis – Methuselah (who died in the year of the flood) lived 969 years. Abraham lived around 500 years later, approximately 2000 BC and he lived for 175 years. King David lived around 1000 BC for just 70 years.

Much more recently, in 2007, investigations around the Black Sea area have caused scientists to conclude that a great flood in remote times accounted for the pattern of migration and the spread of agriculture to Europe. Again such



*The Atrahasis Epic – Babylonian tablet from the 16th century BC*

theories are entirely compatible with the events recorded in Genesis of the dispersion of Noah's family after the flood. All of these pieces of evidence can bolster our faith in the reality of the Genesis flood. As one writer has put it: *'When it comes to the interpretation of the event the biblical record clearly stands apart from the others, supporting its own claim to be not just a human tale but the revelation of God'* (Alan Millard, *Treasures from Bible Times*, page 41).

## Discoveries at Ebla

The discovery of the ancient city state of Ebla, has caused scholars to re-write previous ideas on the

*One of the 18,000 clay tablets found at Ebla*



development of languages and has shown evidence that complex language and writing was developed much earlier than previously thought. Criticism had been levelled at the Bible to suggest that the book of Genesis is simply legend handed down by word of mouth, because writing was not advanced in ancient times. This is clearly wrong as the discoveries at Ebla show. It was in the spring of 1976 that diggings at Tel Mardikh in Northern Syria, 40 miles south of Aleppo and 65 miles north-east of Damascus revealed sensational information for Bible students. This city, which flourished after the flood but well before the time of Abraham, had its own language, previously unknown. It was a sophisticated city, with a regional population of around 200,000 and its own civil service administration.

Genesis chapter 10 gives an account of a well-populated world after the flood and 70 different nations are mentioned here. During the building of Babylon's ziggurat (the Tower of Babel), Genesis chapter 11 tells us of the multiplication of languages, so much so that the builders could not understand each other and this disrupted the building



process. Peoples and nations dispersed to populate the rest of the earth. To this day translators perform a vital function in international relations as a direct consequence of the events at Babel (see article in Light Volume 24.3 page 9).

The discovery at Ebla of a library of 18,000 clay tablets mostly dating from 2400-2000 BC reveal many different languages, all written in cuneiform script. The majority are written in a previously unknown language remarkably similar to ancient Hebrew. It is significant that well before the time of Abraham and some 900 years before Moses, who compiled the first 5 books of the Bible in Hebrew (the Jewish language), a well advanced Hebrew-type language was in common use, one that had left behind primitive 'picture writing'. When you understand that Genesis uses Hebrew names such as Adam, Enoch and Noah (all of which have Hebrew meanings) it necessitates that an ancient form of Hebrew had to be the original language. As one writer has put it '*The weight of evidence from tell Mardikh points to Eblaite / Hebrew being the most advanced, and therefore earliest of the languages on the tablets...*' (Richard Purkis, *The English Bible and its Origins* page 12).

The discovery of large tablets mainly consisting of word lists in up to 42

*Part of the excavations at Ebla near Aleppo in Syria*



different languages, shows the extraordinary fascination of Ebla's scholars with an explosion of languages that had taken place, completely in accord with the Biblical account of events after Babel.

Professor Giovanni Pettinato who published his findings, maintains (against a sceptical establishment) that reference is made to the five cities of the plain, including Sodom and Gomorrah (see Genesis 14.8). There is a creation record remarkably similar to the Genesis account. Other Biblical names appear such as Eber who bears the same name as Ebla's third king. It was in the days of Peleg, Eber's son, that *'the earth was divided'* (Genesis 10.25). Could this be a reference to the language division which still deeply divides people and nations to this day?

The tablets use the name of a god 'Ya'. Is this a shortened form of the later Hebrew 'Yahweh'? Other names of people which are later given to Bible characters are common on the tablets and include Abram, Jacob, Israel, David and Michaiah (the name Michaiah means 'who is like Yah'). The word 'judge' is used to denote rulers of vassal states, similar to the regional judges before the time of the kings of Israel. The word 'Canaan' is used in the

tablets to denote what we know today as the land of Israel.

## Conclusion

The Ebla tablets provide a treasure trove of fascinating evidence of the world in the period between the flood and the birth of Abraham. The full implications of this massive amount of archaeological material has still not been fully assessed, and it must be understood that there are political pressures on archaeologists in Arab lands, lest their findings and conclusions are found to bolster Jewish interests, in particular any historical connection to the land of Israel.

The clay tablets found by the archaeologists support the ancient Biblical records in the book of Genesis and give us confidence in their veracity. However, it is only by reading the whole of God's Word that we can come to a full understanding of its message. This can lead us to have a lasting faith which is pleasing to God. As we read in the New Testament:

'...without faith it is impossible to please him, for he who comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him' (Hebrews 11.6).

Justin Giles  
Kent, UK





## IMPORTANT BIBLE WORDS

### Humility

**There is a saying that ‘pride goes before a fall’. In other words don’t be over confident and boast about your own abilities. This is based on the words of the wise man Solomon found in Proverbs:**

**‘Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall’ (Proverbs 16.18).**

**Yet even Solomon himself came to grief when humility gave place to pride in his wealth and influence.**

To become aware of the need for humility requires careful thought about our true position in the sight of God as Solomon also reminds us: *‘Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few’* (Ecclesiastes 5.2). Being aware of the need for humility will help us to grow spiritually and please God in our lives.

### Scriptural principles

Before we look at the teaching of Jesus in word and action on the subject of humility, let us remind ourselves of some principles clearly established in the Scriptures and in the Old Testament in particular:

- ❖ The opposite of humility is pride, which God hates as Solomon

wrote: *'Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD'* (Proverbs 16.5).

- ❖ God on the other hand loves man to show humility toward Him and his fellow men: *'The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, and before honour is humility'* (Proverbs 15.33).
- ❖ Isaiah wrote these words: *'For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones"'* (Isaiah 57.15).
- ❖ The prophet Micah wrote this: *'He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?'* (Micah 6.8).

From these references it is clear that humility has first to be shown by us toward God and also toward each other. If we don't achieve the first we are much less likely to achieve the second. There is a close relationship between humility and faith. We learn from Scripture that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11.6) and unless we learn to become humble then our faith will not fully develop.

Hebrews chapter 11 gives us a number of examples of faithful men and women including Abraham and Moses.

Abraham was a man of great faith who trembled at the Word of God and was obedient to it, even being prepared to offer his own son as a sacrifice to Him. Moses, for the sake of the children of Israel, was prepared to be removed from being leader of God's people, to be blotted out of the book of life in order to save the nation from destruction and obtain their forgiveness. Moses was a man of great faith and humility – the meekest of men.

## The teaching of Jesus

With these principles in mind let us now turn to the teaching of Jesus on this subject of humility. It may surprise you to learn that Jesus' specific words about humility are limited to six references in the Gospels (three in Matthew, two in Luke and one in John).

Matthew records the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount where the word 'humility' is not actually used. The words are *'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'* (Matthew 5.3). These simple words have a far deeper meaning which catches the spirit of the tax collector's prayer *'God be merciful to me a sinner!'* (Luke 18.13). So the



full meaning is: Blessed is the person who is conscious of the desperate need for forgiveness and who is convinced that in God and in God alone, that need can be supplied. The poor in spirit are those who realise their own abject helplessness and appreciate the greatness of the riches of God's grace toward sinners.

The second reference is in Matthew chapter 18. Here the disciples asked Jesus: *'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'* Jesus called a little child into their midst and said:

*'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter*

*Jesus used a small child to illustrate the total trust and humility he wanted from his followers*

the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 18.1-4).

We should note here that it was a little child who in innocence accepts from its parents what they say without question. We know it is not long before the questions come and the innocence is lost, but initially there is a childlike trust and belief in its parents. Jesus teaches us to be like *'little children'* in the sight of God, to show humility and trust in our heavenly Father and this will lead to a place in God's kingdom.

In the third reference from Matthew, Jesus denounced the Scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of the Jews, for their love of praise



from men, which was a form of pride and he taught his disciples not to follow their example:

'They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the market-places, and to be called by men, "Rabbi, Rabbi". But you, do not be called "Rabbi"; for one is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for one is your Father, he who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for one is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted' (Matthew 23.6-12).

This brings us to the two references in Luke. Firstly Jesus told a parable spoken against the lawyers and Pharisees who loved the chief seats in the synagogues and the uppermost rooms at feasts (Luke 14.7-11). This was blatant pride on their part, the opposite of humility and what Jesus taught. The discourse is summed up by the following words which are very similar to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 26: *'...whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted'*.

The second reference in Luke is similar in its teaching – it concerns

the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector who both went into the temple to pray. The parable ended with the teaching *'...for everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted'* (Luke 18.9-14). Exalting oneself is to be proud and as we have already noted, this is an abomination to the Lord. The Pharisee thanked God that he was not like the tax collector – a miserable sinner, and so he considered himself to be superior to him. The sinner in humility, called on God to be merciful to him.

## The example of Jesus

We now come to the greatest teaching of Jesus on humility. It is given on the occasion just before his death when he washed his disciples' feet and followed this action with the words recorded by John:

'If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you' (John 13.14).

He was the Son of God – the future king of the world and yet he stooped and washed the disciples' feet. It was a menial and unpleasant task to wash feet dirty and dusty from the road, and not one of them had offered to wash his feet. Jesus humbled himself and washed theirs





*Jesus washes his disciples' feet*

as an example of humility and love for his disciples. This act of humility was made even greater because he also washed the feet of the one destined to betray him. Symbolically, we wash one another's feet when we do service to each other and thereby demonstrate the characteristic of humility.

However, none of us can rise to the greatest example of humility and love for others which was carried out by Jesus through that great act of sacrifice on the cross. Speaking of this, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians describing the extent of the service that Jesus demonstrated by this: *'...he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.'* (Philippians 2.8). Even though Jesus knew what was going to happen – and how terrible that must

have been – he prayed: *'...not my will, but yours, be done'* (Luke 22.42) and later on the cross, in this selfless act of sacrifice he was able to say: *'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do'* (Luke 23.34).

We have already referred to the words in Proverbs *'Before honour is humility'*. Certainly, Jesus was the personification of this characteristic, and Paul continues in his letter to the Philippians:

*'Therefore God also has highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and those on earth...'* (Philippians 2.9,10).

## **Learning the lesson of humility**

It is humbling to think that by comparison with God we are nothing. Even though we may think

we are great, in reality we are but a grain of sand upon the seashore. Yet if we are influenced by God's word we can be given the honour of knowing God through the great sacrifice of His Son. With this knowledge, how could we be anything but humble before Him and in His sight?

To be humble in our dealings with one another is much more difficult but we have examples in the lives of both good and evil men recorded in the Bible and here are just a few of them:

- ❖ Naaman the Syrian humbled himself eventually to wash seven times in the River Jordan and was cured of his leprosy (2 Kings 5.10-14).
- ❖ David, the man destined to be king, listened to the counsel of Abigail and saw the Lord's hand in her advice which he followed (1 Samuel 25.32-35).
- ❖ Ahab king of Israel and Manasseh king of Judah whose wickedness is described in Scripture, humbled themselves and were spared the calamity that God had threatened to bring on them (1 Kings 21.27-29 and 2 Chronicles 33.18,19).
- ❖ Daniel could have taken credit for interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream but he confessed

his inability to do anything without God (Daniel 2.27-30).

- ❖ Paul's 'U-turn' in renouncing his past life as a Pharisee – from persecuting the believers to joining them and being persecuted himself. This required great humility which he showed throughout the rest of his life. He wrote these words to the believers at Corinth: *'...I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God'* (1 Corinthians 15.9).

The examples we have considered, and there are many more, will help us to develop humility and to sanctify the Lord in our hearts by reading, studying and trying to understand the teaching of God's Word. We need to recognise at all times His greatness, majesty and power, and learn to ask God as Paul did when he was confronted by the majesty of the risen Christ on the road to Damascus:

**'Lord, what do you want me to do?'** (Acts 9.6)

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